

Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

BCV thrift store now open for business

By Tony Martin
Associate Editor

Whatever preconceived notions one might have about the typical "thrift store" are quickly laid to rest after visiting the Village Mart in Cedar Place shopping center in Clinton.

Village Mart, a ministry of the Baptist Children's Village (BCV), held its grand opening September 9 with a ribbon cutting sponsored by the Clinton Chamber of Commerce.

"We realized several years ago that we were receiving more donations of merchandise that we could use at the Children's Village," said Henry Glaze, BCV assistant director. "We wanted to share what we had with the community."

"Ronny (Robinson, BCV executive director) and I talked about it, and came up with the idea of a thrift store. We wanted it to be a retail-looking establishment — quality was important," Glaze said.

"We visited many other thrift stores to see what we needed to do to provide a pleasant experience," he pointed out.

A quick glance around the store lends credence to that goal. The store has none of the atmosphere that so often personifies a typical thrift store. High quality items are attractively displayed, and clutter is nonexistent.

The children and families in the care of BCV have the first



OPEN FOR BUSINESS — Henry Glaze, assistant director of the Baptist Children's Village (BCV), cuts the ribbon signifying the grand opening of Village Mart, a thrift store benefiting the work of BCV. Village Mart is located at 313 Highway 80 East in Clinton, in Cedar Place shopping center. (BR photo by Tony Martin)

opportunity to get what they need from items donated to BCV. What is not used is then forwarded to Village Mart.

All funds generated through the sale of those items go toward the BCV general fund. These funds benefit the ministries of BCV including, but not limited to, residential child care for children with a family crisis, family counseling services, and residential care for single women with children.

"As a part of our ministry, we want to help needy families,"

said Glaze. "We want to help local churches. We also want to provide employment opportunities for clients of the Village."

Village Mart is an extension of the ministries already in place at BCV, including the five residential campuses, Northeast Miss. Family Ministries, Residential Family Ministries for single mothers, Christian Women's Job Corps, and counseling services.

Village Mart will not accept donations directly. Instead, donations must be made at one of the five BCV campuses.

Operating hours of Village Mart are Tuesday through Friday, 10 a.m.-6 p.m., and Saturdays from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

The store is located at 313 Highway 80 East in Clinton, behind Mazzio's Pizza.

Even after 105 years of service to children and families across Mississippi, BCV continues to find new and innovative ways to minister to those in need.

For more information about Village Mart, call (601) 922-2242 or e-mail villagemart@baptistchildrensvillage.com.

Effects of 9/11 attacks minimal, Barna discovers

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — Although nearly half the population says their faith was a critical resource in helping them respond to the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, a new Barna Research Group poll suggests that people's religious beliefs and practices have not changed.

The survey also found that barely half of the nation's churches acknowledged or addressed the attacks in any way. Only one of four adults who attend a Christian church said their church had engaged in specific prayer regarding the attacks, and fewer said their church had provided sermons or other teaching related to the attacks.

"None of the agents of influence seemed bent on seizing the attacks as a teaching moment or as a time to ignite deeper self-examination among Americans," said George Barna of the California-based research organization known for jolting evangelical Christians out of their rose-colored view of the lost world around them.

"For the most part, our response to the attacks has been to restore continuity and

comfort as quickly as possible, without much energy devoted to moral, spiritual or emotional growth," Barna said.

The study, released September 3, was based on telephone interviews during the past year with more than 6,000 randomly sampled adults in the 48 continental states.

According to the poll, 25% of adults said their faith has been the "single most important resource" they have relied on and an additional 23% said their faith has been "one of several important resources" that has helped them react to the attacks.

During the last year, there has been no lasting change in people's religious practices, according to the Barna study. Immediately after the attacks, church attendance rose for several weeks and then fell back to normal levels by November.

Research also showed virtually no change in levels of Bible reading, church attendance, prayer, adult Sunday School attendance, and small-group involvement, while the percentage of unchurched adults has remained constant in the past 12 months at 33%.

"What we witnessed was the people who attend once every month or two suddenly returning on a consistent basis for a month or two before falling back into their regular pattern of irregular attendance," Barna said. "It appears that very few people radically changed their personal agenda and added church involvement to their schedule when previously there had been no such activity."

"I was among those who fully expected to see an intense spiritual reaction to the terrorist attacks," Barna acknowledged.

"The fact that we saw no lasting impact from the most significant act of war against our country on our own soil says something about the spiritual complacency of the American public," he pointed out.

Sixty-seven percent of adults did not do anything special to remember or commemorate the Sept. 11 crisis, the report said.

The Barna Research Group is an independent marketing research company located in southern California that has been polling Americans since 1984.

WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

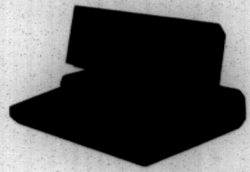
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Sunday School lessons

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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Finding the off switch

The ABC television network is in trouble, and sinking fast. With their once-golden ratings in the trash can and no comeback in sight, nervous network executives have good reason to bite their nails. The honchos at Disney, which owns ABC, have watched as the stumbling network dragged down their financial sheets and drove the company's stock price to an eight-year low.

According to a front-page article by Emily Nelson and Bruce Orwall in the September 13 issue of The Wall Street Journal, angry stockholders have let it be known that the triumph or failure of ABC's fall lineup may turn into a referendum on the future of Michael Eisner, Disney's chief executive officer, and company president Robert Iger.

Does anybody remember Bob Patterson, ABC's can't miss show of the 2002 season? How about Two Guys, a Girl, and a Pizza Place? Join the rest of America.

This crisis grows more interesting when one considers the fact that Eisner got his start in the entertainment business with ABC, back in the '60s. As he rose quickly through the ranks, Eisner is credited with sending the network straight to the top by developing such hits as Three's Company, Happy Days, and the Six Million Dollar Man — vacuous programs, no doubt, but hits nonetheless.

How did ABC get into this mess? First, it's only fair to point out that ABC is not in this boat alone. Although rival NBC boasts top-ranked shows and the ratings championship last season, it did so with a pitiful rating of 13.5, meaning 13.5 million people in the U.S. were watching NBC on an average night.

That anemic number in no way compares with TV seasons of 30, 20, or even 10 years ago. The simple truth is that any network's "highest-rated" show can't compare to the numbers pulled in by the television shows of old. In other words, Americans are headed for the exits when it comes to network television — any network — and

they've been doing so for many years now. The networks complain that there's much more competition now than there was back then, but that's true in virtually every business sector in America today. The networks simply can't admit that they're producing an inferior product.

The great middle of America, the land mass known to the entertainment industry as "flyover country" between New York and Los Angeles, has grown weary of having to turn off the television to protect the tender ears and eyes of their children. Even moderately liberal adults have a hard time excusing the lowest-common-denominator programming.

As a result, our television sets often remain turned off or tuned to one of the many alternatives to gutter programming.

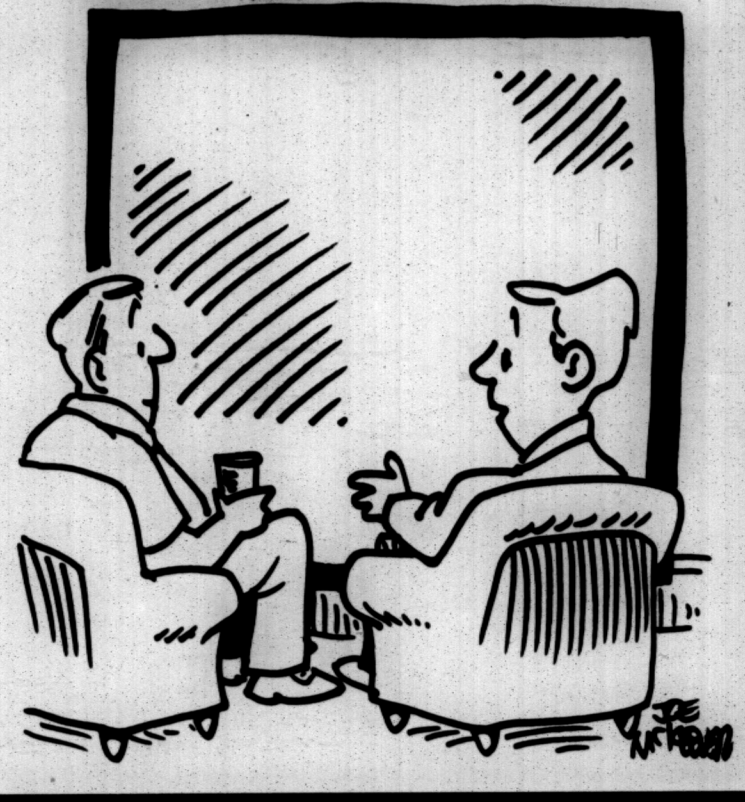
How many ways, on how many shows, can a lesbian wedding be depicted in one season? How many jokes can be milked from two men in bed together?

In what way does it advance the plot when we have to watch men using urinals, or hear the flushing of a toilet as someone comes out of the bathroom with a newspaper under his arm?

C'mon, guys! This isn't hard to figure out. As shows like Touched By An Angel and 7th Heaven have proven, America will flock to network television when there's something worth watching.

To its credit, ABC is trying to win back viewers with a collection of new shows the network deems "family-friendly." We'll see

"I HAD SPENT \$10 THOUSAND ON MY ENTERTAINMENT CENTER BEFORE IT DAWNED ON ME THE ONLY THING WORTH WATCHING IS OLD ANDY GRIFFITH RERUNS."

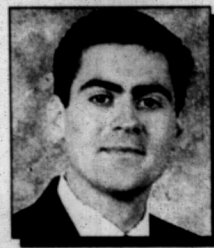


about that, but it may be too little too late for ABC. One wonders if the other high-flying networks are listening.

Several years ago, a prominent television producer was a guest on the ABC news show Nightline. Frustrated by widespread criticism of his latest sex-heavy, profanity-laden network offering, he used God's name in vain to offer this advice to the people who were clamoring for better shows: "If you don't like it, just cut the ***** thing off!"

Many of us are happy to report, sir, that is exactly what we have done.

GUEST OPINION:



We need more evangelical fathers

By Russell D. Moore
Southern Seminary, Louisville, Ky.

Did you see the newspaper articles about the new study demonstrating that conservative evangelical fathers are more likely to be abusive, detached, and isolated from their families?

No? That's because that's not the conclusion found by a new study. If it were, one can be certain it would be an above-the-fold headline in the major daily newspapers across the nation.

Instead, the study, reported in the Journal of Marriage and Family, concluded that conservative evangelicals make better fathers than their secular counterparts. The study suggests that evangelical dads are far more likely to read with their children, eat dinner with them, and engage in outside activities together.

The Boston Globe reports that, according to the study, fathers in a nuclear family with "strong religious and community ties" are "most likely to show up at dinner and put their kids to sleep reading 'Goodnight Moon.'"

Of course, this data leaves some secular academics scratching their heads. "Evangelical Protestant fathers, including Southern

Baptists, are very involved with their children, which I found surprising, given their tendency to embrace traditional gender attitudes," University of Virginia sociologist W. Bradford Wilcox, who conducted much of the research for the study, told The Washington Times.

Wilcox's reaction is predictable. Secular observers seem to wonder how people hold to such bizarre understandings of male headship and the complementary roles of men and women in the home.

The sociologist asks himself why such "oppressive" views of gender roles and family life shouldn't produce homes seething with resentment and neglect. After all, wouldn't one expect that conservative evangelical dads would dismiss childrea-

ring as "woman's work," while they attend Billy Graham crusades or uproot South American rain forests, or do whatever it is that evangelical men do?

Perhaps there is another explanation. Perhaps evangelical fathers are more committed to their children, not in spite of their biblical understanding of the family, but because of it.

Perhaps this counter-cultural understanding of the father as protector and provider brings out something in men deeply ingrained in the warp and woof of creation, something reflecting the fatherhood of God Himself (see Eph. 3:14-15).

Perhaps attention to the biblical mandate on gender roles also means attention to the biblical mandate that husbands lavish their wives (Eph. 5:25-29) and

their children (Eph. 6:4) with love, nurture and kindness.

Ultimately, it does not really matter what sociological studies conclude, or whether academics and journalists pay attention. What matters more is where evangelical dads actually are, in the neighborhood or in the community barbershop or in the stands of the Little League ball field.

The watching neighborhood children matter — those whose fathers prefer the golf course to the front lawn and watching Monday Night Football to reading Good Night Moon for the 700th time.

Perhaps, also, these unbelieving fathers will find the evangelical dad to be a strange phenomenon. Perhaps they will ask why and maybe, just maybe, some of them will discover, not just what it means to be good fathers, but what it means to become sons of the only Father who can truly be called "good."

Moore, a native of Biloxi, teaches Christian theology at Southern Seminary. He also serves as executive director of the Carl F.H. Henry Institute for Evangelical Engagement. Moore is the father of two new sons, Benjamin Jacob and Timothy Russell.

Volunteers still wary one year after attacks

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — Large numbers of Southern Baptists continue to offer themselves for missionary service despite the events of Sept. 11, but the number of Southern Baptists involved in volunteer projects has dropped sharply during the past year.

If present trends continue, 30% fewer volunteers will serve in overseas projects this year, said Bill Cashion, director of the International Mission Board (IMB) volunteers in missions program. The largest drop will be among high school students.

"Immediately following Sept. 11, we didn't see a big drop-off in numbers," Cashion said, "but January through March, things really fell off."

In the first six months of 2002, 13,180 Southern Baptists worked on IMB volunteer projects — a 25% drop compared to the 17,687 volunteers who served during the same six months of 2001. The key reason for declining numbers seems to be the concern of parents and church leaders for the safety of teenage volunteers, said Bron Holcomb, who leads the board's youth mobilization team.

Students are still eager to participate in overseas volunteer projects, but "often trips are canceled because of the influence of one or two people in the church who may or may not be involved in the trip," he said.

Holcomb's group is seeing as much as a 50% decrease in the number of teenagers participating in volunteer trips this year. The IMB had been recruiting volunteers for 24 International World Changers projects; 11 were canceled for lack of participation.



IN NEED OF GOSPEL — An entire world of young people are awaiting the Good News of Jesus Christ, but Southern Baptist volunteers for such mission service have fallen off dramatically since the 9/11 terrorist attacks. (BP photo)

"I think this puts us three years behind — if nothing else happens," Holcomb said. "It's the hardest thing to tell a missionary, 'I'm sorry. We can't come this year because no one signed up.' It's disappointing to the missionaries and nationals, but it's not defeating."

Cashion agrees. "This doesn't mean the job is not being done," he said. "God's work will be done. We'd love to see numbers increase, but we know God is sovereign and can work through those He chooses to send during these difficult times."

Career Service
God still is motivating numerous Southern Baptists to answer his call to career missions. "The real issue is that it's a non-issue," said Jim Riddell, who leads the team that consults with Southern Baptists interested in career missions.

The number of Southern Baptists seeking appointment as career missionaries nearly mirrors the number who were appointed last year, Riddell said. In fact, only one couple has backed out of the appointment process as a result of Sept. 11. A few couples, who will be appointed this year, have indicated that Sept. 11 helped confirm their calling:

● A couple serving as International Service Corps missionaries in Pakistan's mountains were temporarily relocated following the Sept. 11 attacks. Since then, they have been appointed as career missionaries and returned to Pakistan.

● A single woman who had served in Pakistan for two years was struggling with the idea of returning to Pakistan as a single career missionary. She told Riddell that Sept. 11 gave her the resolve she needed to return.

Young Adults
The events of Sept. 11 had a minimal effect on young Southern Baptists committing to two years of service, said Glenn Prescott, who works with the International Service

Corps and Journeyman programs. "I think it had an effect on us early in the year, but it's difficult to know to what extent," he said.

He compared the effect of Sept. 11 to the Y2K millennium scare. "When the Y2K scare came, we had a conference scheduled for Jan. 5; only 50 came," he said. "That was just a little blip on the screen, and then we were back to normal."

"I don't think Sept. 11 will have any long-term effect on us. Numbers will be back to normal and continue to climb."

Collegians

College students have responded to the events of Sept. 11 with a fervency to minister in Muslim nations, said Mike Lopez, who works with collegiate volunteers. More college students have participated in volunteer trips already this year compared to all of last year, Lopez reported.

"State conventions are saying their numbers are down, but we haven't seen it," he said.

Record

"If anything, we've seen volunteers express more commitment that now is the time. We still have a lot of people asking to go to Muslims."

Shun Fear

Cashion encouraged Southern Baptists to not allow fear to influence their decisions regarding overseas service.

"What we need now is to listen to the voice of the Holy Spirit and move as he directs," Cashion said.

"We need folks who are willing to say 'yes' to requests, who believe God will supply all their needs and will use them for his glory."

Is God calling you to overseas service? Log on to <http://going.imb.org>.

Looking back

10 years ago

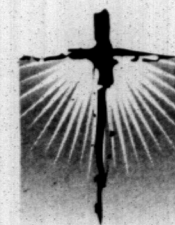
Three young people accept Christ as Savior as a result of students in three Corpus Christi schools being told they couldn't assemble to pray on the school grounds during recent See You at the Pole observances. Over 100,000 students prayed around their school flagpoles in Texas alone.

20 years ago

Southern Baptists are making progress toward the Bold Mission Thrust goal of telling everyone in the world about Jesus Christ by the year 2000, but successful completion of the task is "humanly" impossible, the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee is told.

50 years ago

Fellowship Church, Greene County, completes paying \$2,500 for the pastor's home. The debt was paid within a year. According to pastor James E. Gooch, the church is debt free and has a budget of \$5,000, compared to \$1,000 the previous year.



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Baptists fight lottery

BRENTWOOD, Tenn. (BP) — The Tennessee Baptist Convention (TBC) began distributing 3.2 million anti-lottery church bulletin inserts and 75,000 copies of a 32-page anti-lottery magazine Sept. 4, in a campaign encouraging fellow citizens to vote against a state lottery on Nov. 5 and keep Tennessee gambling-free. Tennessee Baptist staff members, special guests, and other gambling-free constituents rallied with prayer and support before the decorated 30-foot trucks driven by volunteers left the Brentwood office. The anti-lottery publications were delivered to the 67 Baptist associations located across the state. In turn, each association leader will distribute the anti-lottery material to the nearly 3,000 Baptist churches. "We believe the bulletin inserts will capture the attention of the church members and educate them about the danger of a lottery," said James Porch, executive director of the Tennessee convention. "If we lose this opportunity to defeat the lottery, the future influence of Christians in Tennessee to affect any moral issue will be compromised." Porch is encouraging church pastors to speak out on the lottery to their congregations and use the bulletin inserts each Sunday in October. The bulletin inserts highlight the potential negative affects of the lottery on Tennessee's children, schools, economy and the poor. The TBC is also distributing a magazine titled "Keep Tennessee Gambling Free" that includes personal testimonies of recovered gambling addicts, gambling dangers and Bible studies. While acknowledging that polls show 58% of Tennesseans support a lottery, Porch expressed optimism that the tide can be turned by election day. "The biggest difficulty we're facing is apathy," he said.

TLW rally slated for Crys. Springs

Copiah Association in Hazlehurst is sponsoring a True Love Waits (TLW) rally at 7 p.m. on September 28 at First Church, Crystal Springs. The rally, entitled Passion for Purity: Passionate Youth Seeking After the Heart of God, will feature national youth speaker Neil McClendon of Sugarland, Texas, with worship through music provided by Alan and Elaine Cagle with the group Restricted to Freedom. For more information, contact Copiah Association at (601) 894-2024, or Johnny Beaver, pastor of Pilgrims Rest Church, Crystal Springs, at (601) 892-9044. McClendon will also preach in revival at Pilgrims Rest Church at 7 p.m. on September 26-27 and at 10:30 a.m. on September 29. For more information on the revival, contact Beaver at the above number.

IMB: another Gospel barrier about to fall

SPRINGDALE, Ark. (BP) — One of the most formidable barriers to the rapid growth of God's kingdom around the world is about to fall, International Mission Board (IMB) trustees were told during a September 5-8 meeting in Springdale, Ark.

The Gospel faces enormous obstacles in a world where the majority of people cannot read, said Avery Willis, the board's senior vice president for overseas operations. While the Jesus film and the Chronological Bible Storying technique have taken the Good News to hundreds of millions of non-readers, missionaries have had no tools to train them to multiply God's kingdom themselves.

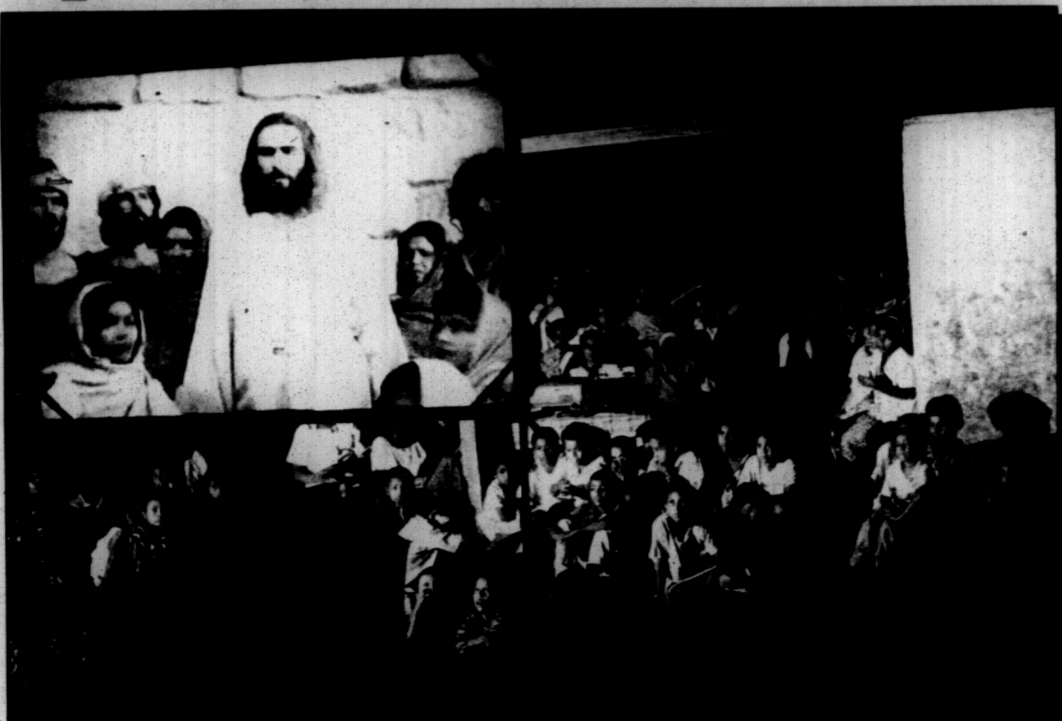
Willis handed trustees a set of compact disc, the first module in a six-part series called, Following Jesus: Making Disciples of Primary Oral Learners, which will show missionaries how to use storying methods to disciple new believers and train church leaders in cultures where people learn by hearing and repeating, rather than through written material.

The material is being developed by a 10-member team in partnership with Progressive Vision, a publisher of electronic resources for missions advancement in Laguna Hills, Calif. Other Great Commission organizations interested in the project include Campus

Crusade for Christ, the Jesus Film Project, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Far East Broadcasting, and Trans World Radio.

"The Gospel hasn't gotten to more than half the people in the world because our methods of teaching and training are based on literacy," Willis said. "It has been limited because so many people don't think and process information and understand the same way we do and because many people live in places that restrict printed Christian material."

"When we put discipleship and leadership training into stories, however, we will see an explosion, as people keep passing the old, old story from one person to another and from one village to the next," Willis said. "I believe we are sitting on the next wave of Gospel advance. I believe God has poised us to go to the 70% of the world that can't read."



MOST POPULAR FILM — Christian experts believe billions of people around the world have viewed the Jesus film over the past several decades. Southern Baptist missions strategists have put together a new program to help missionaries follow up on people who want to know about Jesus after viewing the film or being touched by other missions efforts, but who cannot read or write. (BP photo by Roy Burroughs)

The trustees also appointed 50 new missionaries, approved the purchase of warehouse space, allocated money to close the books on building renovations, processed missionary personnel changes, and took up an impromptu offering for a missions project in a Last Frontier country.

IMB trustees approved 50 new overseas workers who were appointed Sept. 8 before an overflow crowd of more than 3,400 people at First Church, Springdale.

Preaching from 1 Cor. 2, IMB President Jerry Rankin told the group that new missionaries entering a strange culture often are overwhelmed with fear and a sense of their own weakness — and that's exactly what God wants. While education, skills, and experience are important, they aren't going to get the job done on the mission field, he said.

"It is only when you lift up Jesus Christ in a bold, positive witness that people will be saved," said the native Mississippian and graduate of Baptist-affiliated Mississippi College in Clinton. "Maybe not all of them, but it is the nature of the gospel message, indwelt of God's Holy Spirit, that draws people to Jesus."

Many people follow cultural religious beliefs or self-serving humanism because no one has ever told them the good news of God's love and salvation in Jesus Christ, Rankin said.

"Every second, someone is dying without Christ, entering a Christ-less eternity," Rankin said, "not because they rejected Jesus Christ, not because they have no spiritual need in their own life..., but because no one has ever told them of God's redemptive plan that all the people may know Him."

In business sessions, trustees approved funds to purchase a

52,000-square-foot warehouse facility. The two million dollar move will relieve the board of more than \$100,000 in annual costs for rented space and bring its warehouse facility much closer to the main building, said David Stevenson, the board's vice president for finance. In addition, leasing out 20,000 square feet in the building will generate \$97,000 a year in income.

The board allocated \$427,554 to close the books on completed renovations of the board's Richmond, Va., headquarters, bringing the final cost of the project to \$15.7 million. The renovation was designed to make work space more flexible as the entity adapts to serve the rapidly growing numbers of Southern Baptist missionaries and help more churches find ways to fulfill their Great Commission missions mandate.

The final allocation covered construction costs that exceeded the original appropriations.

Trustees also processed the transfer of one missionary to another field of service, resignations of 10 units (17 people) and one medical disability. They approved five sales and transfers of property and endorsed longevity salary increases for two International Service Corps missionary units.

They also received a report of \$117,093 disbursed for seven hunger, relief, and development projects in five of the board's 15 regions.

Two of the missionary units resigning (four people) cited a Jan. 31 request to affirm the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message as a factor in their decision to resign, said Avery Willis, the board's senior vice president of overseas operations.

Eleven other units (22 people) had previously resigned over the request. A total of 5,437 missionaries currently are serving through the IMB.

Temple Mount may collapse, experts fear

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — A bulge in the wall of Jerusalem's Temple Mount, which conservationists warn is in danger of collapsing, is the fault of Palestinian excavations, according to a U.S. congressional office.

"The bulge in the wall is being caused by the Palestinian Authority," said Stacey Felzenberg, a spokesperson for Rep. Eric Cantor (R-Va.). Cantor is a longtime advocate of legislation that would bar all aid to the Palestinian Authority unless it stops excavations at the site of the Temple Mount.

The Temple Mount Preservation Act, H.R. 2566, introduced by Cantor in 2001, with 37 co-sponsors, has languished in the House International Relations Committee. Felzenberg said she hopes recent developments in the condition of the Temple Mount will force the bill out of committee.

The Temple Mount was the site of the temple built by King Solomon and the rebuilt temple that stood during Jesus' earthly ministry. The Dome of the Rock, a Muslim mosque, is now located on the mount.

"The excavation clearly needs to cease as soon as possible," Felzenberg said. "And that's what this legislation would do."

If excavation doesn't stop, the bulge could collapse the wall, endangering the lives of hundreds of worshipers, according to Jerusalem's mayor and Israeli conservationists. The bulge is located along the southern wall of the Al Aqsa Mosque compound known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as Haram al Sharif.

"In my view we have reached a moment of truth," Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert told The Washington Times. "There are serious grounds for fearing that it could collapse."

Muslim authorities, on the other hand, dis-

pute those claims, arguing that the Israelis' warnings are a politically motivated attempt to establish Israel's authority over the mount.

Israeli conservationists want the wall dismantled and rebuilt. Adnan Hussein, director-general of a Muslim religious trust that oversees Islamic sites in Jerusalem, told the Associated Press that rebuilding the wall is unacceptable and no outside interference will be acceptable.

"This bulge is under our monitoring since the '70s," he told the Associated Press. "It is stable. We don't feel that there is any dangerous situation."

Meanwhile, both Muslim and Jewish observers said if the wall does collapse, the repercussions could be felt globally. If the wall were to collapse on Jewish worshipers, one Islamic expert said that Muslims would celebrate claiming it was Allah's judgment on the Jews. If the wall were to fall on Muslim worshipers, Rafael Israeli of Hebrew University said the Muslim world would be on fire.

"It would be a good cause for violence from Cameroon to Indonesia," he told CNSNews.com.

American intervention in the controversy would come in the form of Cantor's legislation. If approved, the bill would bar all aid to the Palestinian Authority, chaired by Yasser Arafat, as long as it continues unauthorized excavations.

Palestinian excavations began in 1998 and have resulted in the destruction of antiquities that date back to the time of the first temple. The Jerusalem Post reported that some of the antiques were dumped in the Kidron Valley and sold on the black market.

Cantor has described the excavations as "one of the most unprecedented attacks on religious heritage of our time."

Sudan is subject of State Dept. prayer vigil

WASHINGTON (BP) — Southern Baptists have an opportunity to demonstrate to the United States government their concern for Christians and others persecuted by the militant Islamic regime of Sudan, during a weeklong vigil on Sept. 18-24 outside the State Department building in Washington.

Southern Baptists will be among the groups who will lead a two-hour watch during the vigil. The Southern Baptist-led session will be from 1-3 p.m. EDT on Sept. 24.

The purposes of the vigil include showing solidarity with the persecuted in Sudan, praying for the Sudanese who are suffering, and calling for the U.S. government to be active in seeking an end to the Khartoum regime's oppression.

The Islamic regime ruling over Sudan has waged what has been widely described as a genocidal campaign against Christians, animists and moderate Muslims in the southern and central regions of the African country. The Khartoum-supported effort has included slave raids and the bombardment of hospitals, churches, schools, and relief stations.

During a civil war of two decades, two million people have been killed and five million people have been displaced. Leaders of the Khartoum regime and the resistance movement agreed in July to a framework for a peace process. There have been reports the Islamic government's forces have continued to attack Sudanese in the south, however. Islamic troops killed about 1,500 people and displaced about 350,000 in a late July effort, according to the Institute on Religion and Democracy, which is sponsoring the vigil.

Sudan is one of six countries designated by the State Department as countries of particular concern in the area of religious freedom. The others are Burma, China, Iran, Iraq, and North Korea.

Watches during the vigil are normally from noon-2 p.m. and 7-9 p.m. The vigil will be held at Galvez Park, which is on the north side of the State Department.

Other groups leading sessions include the American Anti-slavery Group, Christian Solidarity International, local United Methodist churches, local Episcopal churches, the Jewish community, and the Midland (Texas) Alliance for a New Sudan. More information on the vigil is available on the Internet at www.ird-renew.org.



SUDAN PERSECUTION — The Christian church at Tali, Sudan, was destroyed last year by a bomb, one of many indicators of the ongoing persecution of Christians in the predominantly Muslim African nation. No one has been prosecuted for the crime. (Photo courtesy of Front Fellowship)

CONFRONTING CRITICISM

Like it or not, all of us have to deal with criticism. Why? Because each of us is a critic and we each have critics. Now, there is a difference between evaluating situations and life, and simply being critical of others. We are made with all kinds of physical, emotional, and spiritual sensors that pick up the vibrations of the world around us that enable us to function, to size up the setting in life, and to know how to deal with it — but criticism is a different thing. Criticism is a close first cousin to fault finding, which expresses opinions with a hurtful edge.

The Lord Jesus knew what it was like to live in a world of critics, for whatever He did came under the close eye of scrutiny from those whose focus in life was on hurting Him. For us, we need to confront criticism — not just to be critical of the critics, but to see it in our own hearts and do something about it. Someone suggested that you don't need to explain things because your friends do not need it and your enemies won't believe you anyway. That may be so, but we really do need to look and examine ourselves to see if we have been infected with the virus of criticism.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said in Matt. 7, "Judge not that ye be not judged, for with the same judgement that ye judge, ye shall be judged." Pointedly, He brings the believer to look at his own involvement in criticism.



Directions

Jim Futral, executive director-treasurer
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

Let me share with you, as well as remind myself, some truths that I have discovered about criticism:

- *If you are looking for faults in others, you can surely find them, even in perfection.* Probably no one in His day had more critics than Jesus. Yet, here is the perfect, sinless, surrendered Son of God with virtually everything He ever said, every place He ever went, every miracle He ever performed, and even the sacrificial death He endured, open to criticism. Some people said that He even had a devil!

I am constantly amazed as decent people do good things only to have someone rise up to criticize them. Then, I remember Jesus, and realize that that sort of thinking has never been abnormal. If a person is going to be a critic, he will find a way to criticize.

A politician was being given an award for outstanding achievement. When it came time to be presented with the award, he was called to the podium and there was given accolades, along with a special plaque. After being handed the

award, the man simply said to the presenter and to the audience, "Thank you." His long-time critic, sitting at the back of the room, leaned over and with a sneer on his face and in his voice said, "I wonder who wrote that speech for him?"

- *A critical spirit reveals more about the critic than it does about the one being criticized.* According to Scriptures, our words reveal our hearts. More often than not, our criticism reveals that our hearts are filled with bitterness, harshness, unforgiveness, and occasionally, meanness. If you are going to live criticizing, then you are going to reveal the true nature of your heart. Whether you like it or not, everyone will see it and you will announce to them what kind of person you really are.

The Pharisees were noted to be the best people alive. Without question, they were the most religious people you could find, but the criticism of Jesus began to unveil their hearts. It was their criticism that began to show that they were not really who or what they said they were. It was

their criticism that began to demonstrate that they had no sensitivity or spiritual understanding about the things of God. It was their criticism that was the window that allowed everyone to see the hate inside.

- *One of the most significant truths that Jesus pointed out about our critical spirits is that if we live with this kind of spirit, we will soon find that we are surrounded by people who mirror that same spirit.* In Jesus' words, people will be critical of us by the same standards and methodology that we are critical of others.

How do you get rid of a critical spirit? I am convinced that only God can do that and it takes a transforming, spiritual birth. It takes a saving experience and a new heart in order for us to be delivered. Only Jesus can do that. Yet, the living out of a non-critical attitude can be encouraged and helped as we recognize the God-given goodness in other people's lives. If we spotlighted the good qualities in other folks with the same brightness that we tend to criticize, we would probably celebrate rather than criticize. It would also be helpful if we constantly reminded ourselves that we do not understand all that a person is going through or everything that is involved in their decisions or actions.

Finally, we would probably be much more sensitive if we kept in mind that we would not want others doing to us what we do to them.

Ridgecrest to host law officer's summit

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP) — Police officers, military personnel, judges, and judicial branch representatives will gather at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center near Asheville, N.C., to take part in the First Annual Law Enforcement Summit on Oct. 1-3.

"While the events of 9/11 increased our nation's appreciation for heroism of our law enforcement officials and the dangers they face, there are few opportunities for officers to come together for a time of encouragement, fellowship and spiritual renewal," said J. Paul Phillips, a Florida law enforcement veteran who, along with his wife, Elizabeth, has worked to develop the summit.

Using the theme, "The Star, the Shield, and the Cross," the event is designed to offer law enforcement officers time for contemplation and relaxation, while also providing practical information about the financial, professional, domestic and spiritual aspects of life. Conference workshops led by law enforcement professionals will focus on stress management, communication, mentoring and avoiding temptations.

Bobby Smith, a former Louisiana state trooper, who was shot and blinded while on duty, will serve as the keynote speaker, while Ralph Sexton Jr., pastor of Trinity Church in Asheville, and Wayne A. Barber, founder of To Live is Christ Ministries, will lead several summit sessions.

Musical guests will include Steve Wiggins, founder and lead singer of Big Tent Revival; Squire Parsons, an award-winning gospel singer and songwriter; and Promise, a praise and worship band.

The summit is open to all city, county, state or federal law enforcement employees and their spouses, including military personnel and those serving in the judicial branch. For more information or to register, call (800) 588-7222.

JUST FOR THE RECORD

Branch Church, Morton, held its GA recognition program on Aug. 25. Brittany Tagert, Kayla Stevenson, Jessica Tagert, and Casey Torrance (pictured) received their bracelets with charms representing the level they completed in world ventures.



GAs of Branch Church, Morton

Gunter Road Church, Florence, sent a group on a mission trip in July to Millersville, Maryland. The men worked on construction at Elvaton Church and the youth/college career group help conduct backyard Bible clubs in the evening. Pictured (from left, front row) are Gene Jordan, pastor; Savannah

Moak, and Lindsey Moak. (back row) are Stephanie Rimes, Danielle Rimes, Sarah Fitzgerald; Amber Williams, Courtney Smith, Chelsea O'Hern, and Shelby Wells; not pictured are Lacey Moak and Lindsey Moak.



Youth of Gunter Road Church, Florence

Belgard; Curtis Wicker; Brittney Wicker; Emily Summerlin; Suzannah Belgard; Marla Turner; (back row) Johnny Allen; Jimmy Rowzee; Jeremy Jordan; Joyce Hopkins; Jeff Rowzee; Irving Forrester; and Mike Heaney.

Ingalls Avenue Church, Pascagoula, Media Library has just completed its 4th successful summer reading program with 34 children participating. Working hard for 10 weeks, the children read 1,383 books. Pictured (from left, row 1) are David Gonzales, Dillion Coulter, Wyatt Falks, Sara Reed, Halley Prisock, Lavory Falks; (row 2) Dana Speights, Kaity Wolverton, Katy Gregory, Abby Snow, Adam Smith; (row 3) Keely Arthur, Emilee Turner, Meagan Hamm, Chase Donald, Jonathan Coulter, Jessica Baker; (row 4) Dustin Speights, Andy Smith, Jessica Gregory, Montana Bates, and Christopher Speights. The top

Pews, pulpits, baptistries, stained glass, carpet, and steeples.
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readers were Kaity Wolverton, 112 books; Sara Reed, 137 books; Katy Gregory, 167 books; and Brandilyn Bates, 118 books. Ninette Speights is library director. John Turner is pastor.

A ceremony for the GAs of **Friendship Church, McComb,** was held on Aug. 4 at the 11 a.m. service. Donna Wells is the leader. LaVerne Summerlin is pastor. GAs pictured (from left, front row) are Stephanie Rimes, Danielle Rimes, Sarah Fitzgerald; (back row) Amber Williams, Courtney Smith, Chelsea O'Hern, and Shelby Wells; not pictured are Lacey Moak and Lindsey Moak.



GAs of Friendship Church, McComb

Sold Out from **First Church, Byram,** will be in concert at Yandell Road Church, Madison, (previously Deerfield) on Sept. 29 during the regular worship hour at 10 a.m. Brenda Quattlebaum is minister of music. Author Comans is pastor.

A Sunday School Rally, sponsored by the **Pontotoc Association,** will be held at 7 p.m. on Sept. 23 at Friendship Church. Johnny Sykes is the

Sunday School director for the association. For additional information, call (662) 489-5733 or 489-1251.

West Jackson Street Church, Tupelo, will celebrate its 40th anniversary on Oct. 6. The special worship service will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude at noon. Bert Harper is pastor.

Cowart Church, Charleston, will host inspirational Christian singer Terry Terrell of Foxworth in a gospel concert on Sept. 21 at 5 p.m. For more information call the church at (662) 647-5261.

Dumas Church, Dumas, will celebrate its 100th anniversary at 10 a.m. on Oct. 6. James Lewis, Southaven, will be the guest speaker. Roy Bostick is interim pastor.



Children of Ingalls Church, Pascagoula

Macedonia Church in Lee County will celebrate its 90th anniversary on Oct. 6. Services will begin at 10 a.m. Robert Armstrong, Mike Brazeal, Ferrell Cork, and Wayne Gullett will be the guest speakers for the day. Dexter Griggs, former music director, will direct the music for the day. A covered dish lunch will be served at noon. Dwight Brown is host pastor and Billy Little is host music director.

Old Hebron Church, New Hebron, will present Kenny and Harriett Robbins in a music concert at 6 p.m. on Sept. 29. Jon Haimes, pastor.

A Marriage and Parenting Conference led by Jim Alford, director of NE MS Family Ministries of the Baptist Children's Village, will be held at **Holly Church, Alcorn Association,** on Sept. 21 from 7-9 p.m. For additional information, call (662) 286-3474.

Ralph Graves, pastor of **First Church, Soso,** will be honored with a reception at the church on Sept. 21, on the occasion of his retirement. The reception is scheduled from 6-8 p.m. Graves also served full-time at Highland and Calvary, and interim pastor at Second Avenue, Friendship, and Unity in Jones Association, and other churches in Mississippi and Georgia. He served as interim pastor at Greens Creek, Petal, and Pleasant Grove in Wayne Association. Graves will continue to live in Laurel, and will be available for pulpit supply in area churches.



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"Nation's #1 church bus dealer."

What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in your ear, proclaim upon the

HOUSE TOPS.

Matthew 10:27 NAS

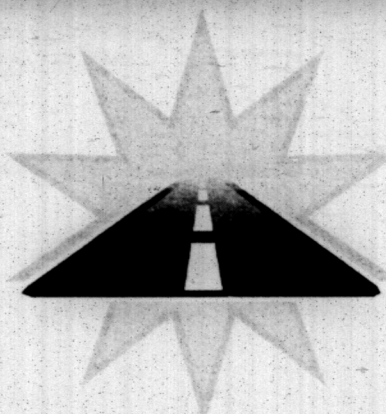
September 19, 2002

HouseTops is a **Baptist Record** supplement produced by the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board's **Communication Services**.

January Bible Study Preview Clinics 2002

**"Helping Your Church
Stay on Course: Studies in
I Corinthians"**

Conference Leader:
Gene Henderson
Pastor, FBC, Brandon



Locations:

September 23	Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain
September 24	Delta State BSU, Cleveland
September 25	Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, Jackson
September 26	William Carey College, Hattiesburg

Conference Times (all locations):

9-9:30 a.m. Registration/Refreshments
9:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Conference – Complimentary lunch will be provided

*Sponsored by: Sunday School Dept., Mississippi
Baptist Convention Board
601-968-3800 or 1-800-748-1651*

Youth Ministers Workshop



November 11-13, 2002
Lake Tiak O'Khata, Louisville

**"Hey, It's More than
Survival or Success;
It's Significance!"**

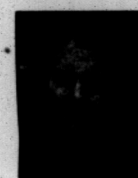
***In a world focused on Survivor and Success,
student ministry must be centered
in Significance.***



Barry St. Clair
*Reach Out Youth Solutions
Atlanta*



Chuck Gartman
*Youth Ministry Services
Howard Payne University
Brownwood, Texas*



Kevin Williams
*KW Ministries
Columbus*



Myrna Gregory
*LifeWay Christian Resources
Brandon*

*For more info, contact the Pastor/Leadership Development
Department at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3305 (Jackson).*

Missions Mobilization CELEBRATION November 15-16, 2002

Friday, November 15

FBC, Jackson, 425 North State Street

Featuring: Co-hosts Ken Rhodes and Karen Ivy

- Celebration Banquet – 6:30 p.m.
- Mobilization Displays
- Music/Drama/Testimonies
- Strategic Contributions of Volunteers – Yvonne Bruce



Sheri Engle
Music



Yvonne Bruce
Speaker

Saturday, November 16

Baptist Building, 515 Mississippi Street

Featuring:

- Continental Breakfast – 7:30 - 8:15 a.m.
- Devotional
- Conferences
 - 1) Ukraine
 - 2) North America
 - 3) Mississippi Strategies of Mobilization

Banquet Cost: \$10

Reservations required by November 12. Call 601-292-3398 by November 12.

**You are invited to this exciting
time of celebrating what God is
doing through Mississippi
volunteers. You will meet and
hear the stories of many of
these volunteers.**

Mississippi Delta MissionsFEST 2002 FOLLOW-UP, Tchula, Miss. November 16, 2002

MissionsFEST 2002

**Come help complete the weatheri-
zation project (light construction &
home repairs), community cleanup,
prayer garden and prayerwalk.
There is no cost to participate.
Meals are on your own.**

Participants must register with Mississippi WMU by 11/8/02

MissionsFEST FOLLOW-UP Registration

(Group) Leader _____ Church _____

Address _____

Phone (day) _____ (evening) _____ (e-mail) _____

No. in Group (male) _____ (female) _____

Groups/individuals are responsible for transportation to ministry sites. Please
copy this form and register groups separately for each ministry project.

Weatherization _____ Comm. Cleanup _____ Prayerwalking _____ Prayer Garden _____

Mail to: MS WMU, PO Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205. Call 1-800-748-1651, ext. 316



2003 Mississippi Baptist All-State Youth Choir and Orchestra

Audition Information

1-800-748-1651

Web site: www.mbc.org

auditions

Auditions dates for the 2003 MBASYC&O
(Open to 9th - 12th graders)

Thursday, Sept. 26, 2002	4 - 7 p.m.	First Baptist Church, Winona
Saturday, Sept. 28, 2002	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	William Carey College Hattiesburg
Thursday, Oct. 3, 2002	4 - 7 p.m.	First Baptist Church, Summit
Saturday, Oct. 12, 2002	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	Mississippi College, Clinton
Monday, Nov. 4, 2002	4 - 8 p.m.	First Baptist Church, Meridian
Thursday, Nov. 7, 2002	4 - 8 p.m.	Fairview BC, Columbus
Saturday, Nov. 9, 2002	10 a.m. - 2 p.m.	North Oxford BC, Oxford

(NOTE: ALL instrumentalists will be expected to audition vocally.)

Instrumental auditions will include:

- A prepared piece
- Sight reading
- Scales
- Technique and tune

Be sure that your young people register with the Church Music Department two weeks before they plan to audition!!! We need to know how many students are coming so that we can provide judges and accompanists.

Sponsored by the Church Music Department
Mississippi Baptist Convention Board

For more information: cwtaylor@mbcb.org, 601-292-3266, 1-800-748-1651, ext. 266



Steve & Becky Carver
Ronnie Floyd
Jack Graham
Rick Greene
Richard Jackson
Danny Lanier
Slater Murphy

Reggie & Ladve Smith
Jay Strack
Don Taylor
Aaron Tones
Ray Walker
Steve Walker

"A Moment of Destiny"

Isaiah 61-8

For more info, contact the MBCB Evangelism Department
1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800

Statewide Woman's Retreat God's Plan...My Part In Every Season of a Woman's Life

Gulfshore Baptist Assembly

Friday, October 4, 3 p.m. - Saturday, October 5, 3 p.m.

Featuring Testimonies and *Breakout Sessions by:



LAUREN WELLS

Richton, Miss.

LAURA SAVAGE

Women's Consultant WMU, SBC



LAURA LEATHERS

Hidden Treasures Ministries
Pickens, Miss.

GLORIA THURMAN

Missionary, Bangladesh &
New York, Columbia, Miss.



**HISPANIC
WOMEN'S RETREAT**
featuring *Diane Garcia!*

PRAISE AND WORSHIP
led by **KAREN HARDY**
Cumberland University, Lebanon, Tenn.

REGISTER: with Gulfshore Baptist
Assembly. Phone: (228) 452-7261
FAX: (228) 452-7263
COST: \$52.50 (all-inclusive);
\$32.50 (conference/meals only);
\$13 (commuter)
FOR INFO: Mississippi WMU,
(601) 968-3800 or 1 (800) 748-1651

Statewide Women's Retreat Registration (Deadline September 27)

CHURCH _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Contact person _____
Names of those attending _____
Total reservations _____
Accommodations desired: ___ 2 per room ___ 3 per ___ 4 per

Plus, at the
same time,



31st Annual CHURCH MEDIA LIBRARY CONFERENCE



First Baptist Church, Kosciusko, Miss.
October 4-5

Program Personalities:
Sue Bartholomew, Mary Bethany
Micki Bessard, Linda Smith
Sue Bessard, Linda Smith
Linda Smith, Linda Smith

Call Conference from Services for more info
601-292-1474 or 1-800-748-1651



PRESCHOOL/CHILDREN'S LEADERSHIP FESTIVAL

2 • 0 • 0 • 2

COST \$10 EACH

NOVEMBER 15 AT 3:15 P.M. — NOVEMBER 16 AT 12:50 P.M.

MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH, HATTIESBURG

Preregistration is requested by November 1, 2002.

LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR

ALL PRESCHOOL LEADERS AND **ALL** CHILDREN'S LEADERS

(Sunday School teachers; Discipleship Training teachers; Mission Friends, Girls in Action, and Royal Ambassador mission leaders; Church Weekday administrators, teachers, and caregivers; Mother's Day Out teachers; and children's worship leaders)



KEYNOTE FEATURE

THE ORR'S
One Way Ministries

featuring also

TODD CAPPS, LifeWay specialist
JAN MARLER, LifeWay specialist
and other leaders from around our state

Sponsored by MBCB Discipleship & Family Ministry
For more info, call Don Hicks 1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800.



GA Missions Madness "Planting God's Garden"

Saturday, November 2, 2002
Colonial Heights Baptist Church, Jackson

Cost: \$5

Registration begins at 8:30 a.m.

9:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Registration for GA Missions Madness, November 2, 2002

Church _____ City _____ Assoc. _____

I am enclosing \$ _____ (\$5) per person for the registration fee for _____ GAs and leaders. There must be one leader for every five girls. The early registration deadline is October 18. If there is still space available after the deadline date, registrations will be accepted at a cost of \$7.50 per person. Mail your payment with the registration form to: WMU Department, MBCB, PO Box 530, Jackson MS 39205-0530. Make check payable to MBCB for the GA Missions Madness event.

Person making reservation _____

Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Daytime phone _____ Evening phone _____

For more information, please contact the Mississippi WMU
at 1-800-748-1651 or 601-292-3322.

GA MOTHER/DAUGHTER OVERNIGHT "AGELESS!!!"

OCTOBER 18-19 CAMP GARAYWA

6 p.m., Friday thru 2 p.m., Saturday
Cost: \$33

Registration begins at 5 p.m.

The registration deadline is **October 4, 2002**. If space is available after the deadline date, reservations will be accepted at the cost of \$38 per person. No refunds after October 4.

For more information contact: Mississippi Baptist WMU at
1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800, ext. 322

Worship Service

October 6, FBC, Biloxi, 6 p.m.

MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

For more information, contact the MBCB
Church Music Department at
1 (800) 748-1651 or in Jackson, (601) 292-3267.

The Way
The Truth
The Life

MISSISSIPPI YOUTH EVANGELISM CONFERENCE

A.E. WOOD COLISEUM
MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE, CLINTON
DECEMBER 30-31, 2002

Registration begins at noon.
First session starts at 2 p.m.
Concludes Tuesday at 3 p.m.



Pray this day for...

September 20 - October 3, 2002

Prayer Ministry Office • P.O. Box 530 • Jackson, MS 39205-0530 • Phone (601) 292-3304 • Mississippi PrayerLine 1 (800) 787-7729 (PRAY)

"A continual position of effective prayer is maintained and strengthened as a person's relationship with Christ through prayer is kept pure and clean through confession and holy living."

J. Chris Schofield, NAMB

Recently, one of the Deaf leaders of Colombia left work and withdrew his salary from an ATM machine. Two men robbed him, as he was leaving the ATM. Praise God for an attitude of "God will provide whatever my family needs." This man's attitude has been a real testimony to many in that city, and God has provided replacement of his salary.

Christian radio programs are reaching the Bihari Muslims of India in the Urdu language. One Bihari Muslim wrote the radio station: "I received a New Testament from you. I am studying New Testament with full respect, and now I believe on this Holy Book." Pray that more Muslim seekers will read the Word of God and believe it.

For: (1) Church Related Vocations Banquet, William Carey College, Hattiesburg, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (P/LD); (2) January Bible Study, Blue Mountain College, Blue Mountain, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (SS); (3) Discipleship Rally (D&FM Emphasis).

Pray for Muslim political leaders such as Indonesia's President Megawati, Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir, Bangladesh's Prime Minister Zia, Pakistan's President Musharraf, Iran's President Kharzai, Iraq's President Saddam Hussein, Libya's leader Qaddafi, Saudi Arabia's King Saud, etc. Pray that they would hear the gospel and be saved.

For: (1) January Bible Study, Delta State BSU, Cleveland, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. (SS); (2) Bob Gay is a church planting strategist at the Chicago Metropolitan Baptist Association. Pray that prospective church planters will continue to be identified, for much needed financial resources, and for mentors and sponsoring churches.

The Ile-de-France Team gives praise for a good year of ministry to the groups in the western suburbs of Paris. Remember these new followers as they are discipled. Continue to ask for lay leaders to emerge from those making professions of faith in Christ.

For: (1) January Bible Study, Baptist Building, Skyroom, Jackson, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m. (SS); (2) Diann Bailey, missionary to Chile, whom many have prayed for during her illness these two years, received her 20 year service pin at the IMB Missions week at Ridgecrest, July 28. Continue to pray for Diann as she faces the challenge of her health problem.

Join with our missionaries in Uruguay in praying for the pastors there as they deal with the increasingly difficult economic situation. However, in all the economic downturn, there is a spiritual upturn and dependence on God in the lives of many pastors. Pray that they will have victory and that God will truly provide for their every need.

For: (1) January Bible Study, William Carey College, Hattiesburg (SS); (2) Pray for the national evangelical believers in Bucharest, Romania, as they pray and fast for the evangelical Harvest Celebration Oct. 6-11. In that one week, 6 percent of the population of Bucharest will have an opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel!

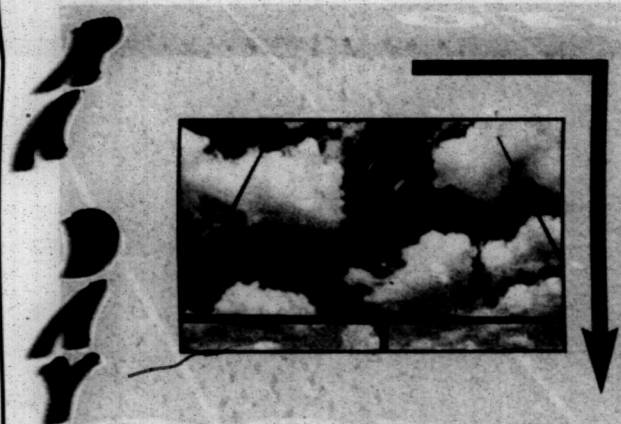
For: (1) Church Related Vocations Banquet, Blue Mt. College (P/LD); (2) Glenn Walker, director of Hands On Missions in Shelby, N.C., asks for prayer for the New York City prayer walking event this fall, for the effectiveness of their Web site in promoting prayer for NYC, and for an understanding of what God wants to teach America.

For: (1) Missionary Parents/ Mississippi Missionaries Fellowship, Garaywa, Patterson Place, 20th-21st (WMU); (2) Baptist Nursing Fellowship, Garaywa, 20th-21st (WMU); (3) Volunteer Chaplains' Training, Baptist Building, Jackson, 8:30 am - 3:30 pm (CPC).

Pray for the discipleship classes in Cordoba, Argentina. Missionaries Mark and Karen Alexander ask you to join them in thanking God for working in the lives of three young leaders who are studying "Experiencing God" with Mark and in the lives of three women who are studying with Karen.

For: (1) State College Student Conference, Harrisburg BC, Tupelo, 7 p.m., 27th - 3 p.m. 28th (CLGM); (2) Pray that the new generation of leaders selected this month at the every-five-year meeting of China's Communist Party will see the church as God's blessing to China.

Pray for a budding young people's group in Sapporo, Japan, reaching high school and college students and working people. Japanese and international Christians are partnering to introduce activities for natural gospel sharing and Christian principles. Pray for them to grow and one day form churches that minister to young people.



Attention: All Lads, Crusaders, & Challengers

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12



Mississippi College

Grades 1-12

10 a.m.-5 p.m.

\$4 per person

Bring your own sack lunch and drink.

REGISTRATION DEADLINE:

OCTOBER 4

For more info call
the Men's Ministry Department
1-800-748-1651 or 601-968-3800



Who?

All boys grades 1-12
and their leaders

What?

Missionary Speaker
Music, Testimonies
Meet the Football Players
and Cheerleaders.
Football Game + MORE FUN!!!

When?

Saturday, October 12, 2002
10 a.m. - conclusion of ball
game (about 5 p.m.)

Where

Mississippi College
Coliseum, Clinton

Cost?

\$4 Per Person (includes ball
game and limited
supplemental insurance)

Please take a moment to send a
card to encourage the children of
our missionaries!

1-93
MISS CAITLYN A. BRASWELL
Parents: Larry & Alicia, General Evangelism

4-94
MISS ALICIA MARTIN
Parents: William & Cynthia, Strategy

4-81
MISS LUCY M. GRAVES
Parents: Edgar & Marilyn
General Evangelism

5-85
MISS BETHANY G. FORTENBERRY
Parents: Robert & Margaret
General Evangelism

8-91
MR. JACOB S. LIGHTSEY
Parents: Timothy & Rebecca
Literature Distribution

11-97
MR. JONATHAN C.G. HARBIN
Parents: Christopher & Karen
Theological Education by Extension

13-84
MR. PAUL W. HARRISON
Parents: Frank & Phoebe
Church Planting

14-83
MISS EVA N. CARLISLE
Parents: Jason & Susan
General Evangelism

15-96
MISS MARISSA J. BLEDSOE
Parents: David & Laurie, General Evangelism

16-86
MR. NATHANIEL D. CARLISLE
Parents: Jason & Susan, General Evangelism

19-98
TAYLOR E. HODGINS
Parents: Raymond & Cynthia
Sports Evangelism

27-00
MISS JADI A. FOSTER
Parents: Michael & Miranda Foster, Strategy

28-88
MISS LINDSEY J. PURL
Parents: John & Amy
Business Management

For security, cards
will be forwarded.
Please send all to:

Child's name and
parent's name
MBCB Church Growth
PO Box 530
Jackson MS 39205

HOUSE TOPS

Lifeway trustees observe 9/11 anniversary

RIDGECREST, N.C. (BP) — Trustees of LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention commemorated the one-year anniversary of the terrorism attacks on America as they completed their semiannual meeting Sept. 10.

In their two-day meeting at Ridgecrest (N.M.) Conference Center, they also announced no dated literature price increases for 2003, adopted a record operating budget, and heard progress of the Holman Christian Standard Bible translation.

Last year on Sept. 11, LifeWay trustees and employees were seeking alternate ways home as the airline industry shut down following the terrorist attacks. This year, in a special service in the new Rutland Chapel, LifeWay employees and trustees observed the anniversary with prayer and worship.

On Tuesday evening at the conclusion of the meeting, trustees approved a 2003 operating budget of \$446,586,000, along with capital expenditures of \$23,641,000.

Ted Warren, chief operating officer and executive vice president, told trustees the budget reflects "a good indication people accept and value LifeWay products."

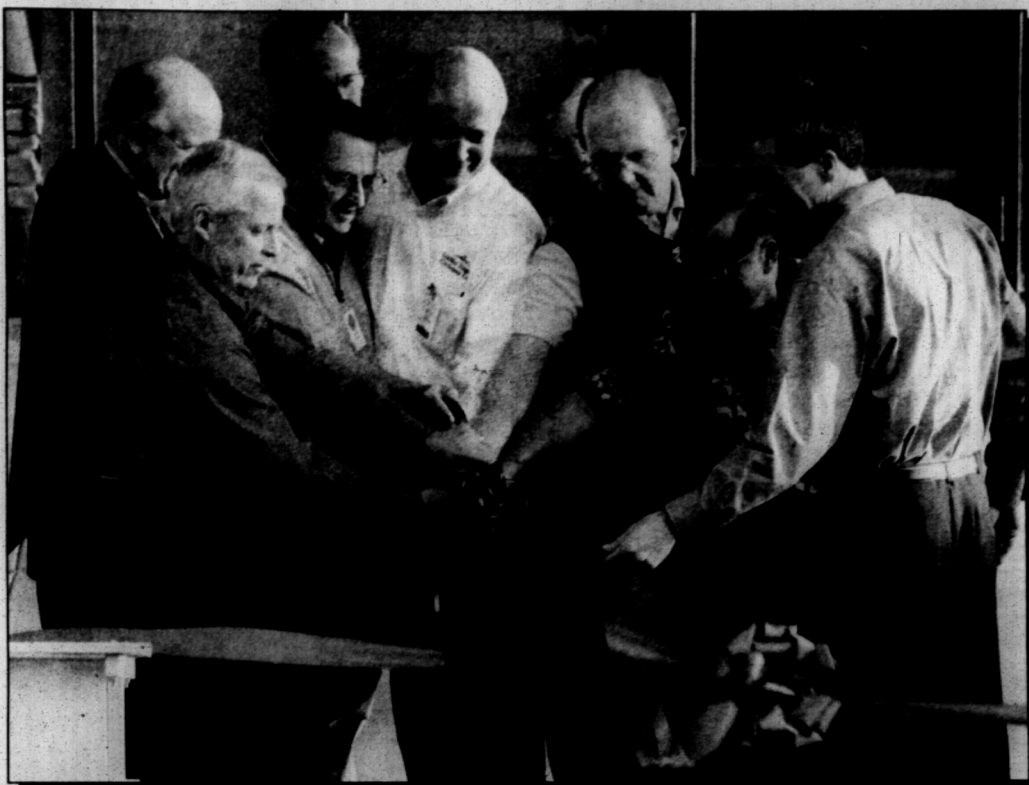
Warren also reported projected record revenue of \$422,542,000 for the entity's 2002 fiscal year, ending Sept. 30. The projected total exceeds 2001 revenue by \$20,100,000, but will

be under the budget of \$437,124,000 by \$14.6 million or 3.3%.

In 2002, funds provided from operations — money for reinvestment in ministry expansion after all expenses have been paid — are expected to be \$14,148,000 or 3.3% of revenue compared to a budgeted 2.6%.

"For a company to go up nearly five percent or almost \$20 million from fiscal year 2001 to 2002 in this economy and remain profitable to the extent we have is really a blessing from God," he said.

Capital expenses, Warren said, will include \$23.6 million for Nashville facilities, LifeWay Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center upgrades, LifeWay stores expansion, and software to integrate business technology and new automated warehouse equipment. Warren also urged trustees to become involved in the integrity of LifeWay by holding it accountable to its vision.



RIBBON CUT — Mountain Laurel Inn, a new 120-room hotel at LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center in Ridgecrest, N.C., was formally opened Sept. 9, 2002. A ribbon cutting ceremony was held in conjunction with LifeWay's semiannual trustee meeting. Participating were (from left): Mike Arrington, vice president of LifeWay's Corporate Affairs Division; Ted Warren, LifeWay's executive vice president and chief operating officer; James T. Draper Jr., LifeWay's president; Randy Bagamary, Ridgecrest's facility manager; Bill Bowman, Ridgecrest's general manager; David Pope, LifeWay trustee vice chairman; Tim Marrow, LifeWay trustee recording; George Iwahiro, LifeWay trustee chairman; and Byron Hill, LifeWay's national director of conference centers. (BP photo by Kent Harville)

In reporting about the year since the Oct. 1 church resources reorganization, Gene Mims, president of the division, told trustees, "The transition has gone beyond my expectations and positioned us for the upcoming year."

He said that more than ever the emphasis of the church resources area is to champion the pastors, grow the churches and grow the ministry.

Mims announced there would be no price increase on church resources' dated literature for 2003-2004. He also distributed a list of church resources dated materials that would change, either by deletion, combination with other materials or move to online. Included in those are the leadership magazines Church Administration, Growing Churches, and Minister's Family, all of which will cease to be published individually but will be combined into a new periodical tentatively to be called Leading Churches.

In reporting on progress in translation and publishing of the HCSB, Ken Stephens, president of the Broadman & Holman division, said all of the Old Testament books have gone through a first and second draft. The New Testament, plus Psalms, Proverbs and the Song of Solomon, are completed and in stores, he said.

"Additionally, we have 51% of the Old Testament in final drafts, and six books are totally finished," Stephens said.

He said the finished Old Testament manuscript is expected by July 2003, with the

final completed Bible available in spring 2004.

Some of B&H's top-selling products in 2002 include the new Oliver North novel, Mission Compromised, and three Beth Moore books: When Godly People Do Ungodly Things, Praying God's Word, and Jesus the One and Only.

Meanwhile, Stephens said, North is traveling by bus on a 58-city tour to promote his book, the first in a three-book deal he signed with B&H.

"Ollie is a great promoter, and we are thrilled about that," Stephens said, noting North would sign books in 73 locations during the September bus tour. Mission Compromised has made The New York Times and Amazon best-seller lists and received national media attention, he added.

Trustees gave the go-ahead for LifeWay to study a land development plan for LifeWay Glorieta (N.M.) Conference Center. The plan includes evaluating the possibility of using 600 of Glorieta's 1,600 undeveloped acres of land as a residential/golf community, said Mike Arrington, vice president of the corporate affairs division.

"The purpose of this plan is for LifeWay to be a good stewards of the underutilized land in order to fund future development and ministry at Glorieta," he said.

Trustees also approved a revised 10-year conference center revitalization plan that enables the Ridgecrest and Glorieta conference centers to continue their ministry into the 21st century.

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HOMEcomings/ANNIVERSARIES

FAITH clinic slated for Gulf Coast

A FAITH training clinic will be conducted October 14-17 at Michael Memorial Church in Gulfport, sponsored by LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville. The clinic is for all church leaders interested in being trained in the FAITH Sunday School evangelism outreach strategy. For more information, contact the Sunday School Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 292-3291 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 291. E-mail: canderson@mbcb.org. Information from LifeWay is also available at (877) 324-8498. For registration information, contact LifeWay Christian Resources' FAITH division at (800) 254-2022.

Antioch, Union: Sept. 29; 11 a.m., noon meal in fellowship hall, and singing with Second Mile from Philadelphia, 1:30 p.m.; David Wilkinson, New Hebron, guest speaker; James Young, pastor.

Dumas (Benton-Tippah): 100th anniversary; Oct. 6; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; lunch at noon in the family life center followed by a brief video presentation of the history of the church, remarks by former pastors, and special music by guest vocalists; James Lewis, Southaven, guest speaker; Roy Bostick, interim pastor.

Rocky Point, Carthage: Sept. 22; Marshall Lum, pastor,

preaching; lunch at noon in fellowship hall; New Born singing in the afternoon.

Hope (Neshoba): Sept. 29; worship, 10:30 a.m., followed with noon lunch in fellowship hall; Wayne Burkes, former pastor, guest speaker; William Crenshaw, music.

Pinckney (Union): Sept. 29; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; worship, 11 a.m.; Kevin Meador, guest speaker; fellowship meal will follow morning worship; singing from 2:30-4:30 p.m. featuring The Feltons; Mike Fondren, Sr., pastor.

Longview, Pontotoc: Sept. 21-22; 119th anniversary; Saturday, praise service, 5:30

p.m., meal, 6 p.m., and time of reflection and celebration, 7 p.m.; Sunday, Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.; service, 10:45 a.m.; George Johnson, guest speaker; Johnny Sykes, pastor.

Blythe Creek, Mathiston: 125th anniversary; Oct. 20; service, 10 a.m.; Richard Ethridge

will present the 125th Anniversary Certificate and Letter of Commendation to the church; Nathan Pulling, former pastor, morning message; dinner on the grounds at noon in fellowship hall; singing in the afternoon presented by Jim Worthing of Grenada, 1:30 p.m.; Mike Adcock, pastor.

REVIVAL DATES

Second, Greenville: Sept. 22-25; 7 p.m.; Tommy Anderson of Lorena Church; Jimmy Smith, music; Ronny Spivey, pastor.

First, Sumrall: Sept. 22-25; Sunday, 10 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; James Messer, Theodore, Ala., evangelist; Price Harris, Shreveport, La., evangelist.

First, Fannin, Brandon: Sept. 22-25; 7 p.m.; Gary Bowlin, Summit, evangelist; Joe Styron, Brandon, music.

Good Hope, Batesville: Oct. 6-9; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; John F. Meek, Oxford, evangelist; David C. Jones, Oxford, music; Gerald H. Walker, pastor.

Temple, Big Point: Sept. 29-Oct. 4; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Don Taylor, evangelist; Steve Walker, music; David B. Williams, pastor.

New Sight, Brookhaven: Sept. 29-Oct. 2; Sunday, 11 a.m.

and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jim McNeil, St. Louis, Mo., evangelist.

East Forest, Forest: Sept. 22-27; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., 7 p.m.; Edward Knowles, music, Frank B. Morgan Jr., pastor; Sunday, Randall Creel; Monday, Anthony Bowen; Tuesday, R.B. Gardner; Wednesday, Dale Round; Thursday, Robert Miles; and Friday, Elmer Ash.

Good Hope, Batesville: Oct. 6-9; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Jon F. Meek, Oxford, evangelist; David C. Jones, Oxford, music; Gerald H. Walker, pastor.

Agricola, Lucedale: Hope for the home revival; Sept. 22-25; 7 p.m.; Jerry Drace, evangelist; Ken Holland, music.

Becker, Becker: Sept. 29-Oct. 4; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.; Mon.-Fri., noon and 7 p.m.; noon meal served each day; Jim Hill, evangelist; Jim Hill Family, music.

BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

Mississippi College (MC) music professor James Slater, of Clinton has once again received the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP) Award for the 2002-2003 school year, making this the twelfth consecutive year Slater has won this award. The award is based on the prestige value of the composer's catalog and the prolific number of compositions. These cash awards, made by the ASCAP, reflect a continuing commitment to assist and encourage writers of serious music. The

awards are granted by an independent panel and are based upon the unique value of each writer's catalog of original compositions as well as recent performances of those works. Slater has been a member of the MC faculty since 1970. Slater has written more than 90 works, many of which have been published and performed. He received the bachelor of music and master of music degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi, and earned the D.M.A. degree from the University of Texas.

STAFF CHANGES

Cliff Pace is the new assistant pastor at Ridgecrest Church, Madison. He is formerly the pastor at New Hope Church in Meridian.

Ernie Sadler, executive director of Jackson County Baptist Association, will be serving as interim



Sadler

pastor at Calvary Church, Pascagoula, effective Sept. 8.

Oral Church, Hattiesburg, has called Johnny Martin as interim pastor, effective June 23. Martin, a native of Greenville, is currently attending New Orleans Seminary.



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Owners, insurers eyeing future of big vans

By Lacey Thompson
Louisiana Baptist Message

Final in a series

Are 15-passenger vans really that unsafe? Well, yes and no. It seems the blame lies in two places, actually — in the vans themselves and in the fact that many are operated without taking some careful precautionary steps.

Even the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says there is nothing inherently wrong with the vehicles. Indeed, they have a rollover rate less than that of light trucks and sports utility vehicles, when lightly loaded.

Problems come when the vans are fully loaded and sudden or emergency maneuvers are made. However, that is enough for some people.

For instance, the Colorado School Districts Self Insurance Pool has said it will stop covering 15-passenger vans. Also, Rep. Mark Udall, D-Colo., is sponsoring a bill in the United States Congress that would ban school districts nationwide from using 15-passenger vans to transport students.

It is not the first time lawmakers have addressed the issue. In 1974, Congress passed a law establishing safety standards for vehicles used to transport school children. The law prohibits schools from buying vehicles that do not meet the standards — and 15-passenger vans do not.

However, loopholes and lack of enforcement has meant the law has had relatively little impact. Also, the law did not address the issue of transporting "school-age" children or others by churches and day-cares and such.

In ensuing years, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has continued its fight to tighten standards for transporting school children. It has turned to states for action, and many have passed laws

requiring use of vehicles that meet federal standards for the transportation of school children — Louisiana among them.

However, it appears as if it may be the insurance companies and courts that could curtail the use of 15-passenger vans as transport vehicles by others.

Church Law and Tax Report Executive Update.

"Churches that continue to use 15-passenger vans to transport people are assuming an increased risk of liability unless they take specific steps to reduce the risk," legal experts Richard Hammar and James Cobble report.

Erwin said he is not sure how Louisiana law reads on the issue of 15-passenger van use. "But all it takes is a bad accident and bad facts and somebody looking for money," he said.

So, what can churches and others do to offset the safety and liability risks of 15-passenger vans?

That is the second part of the equation — and observers offer various lists of actions.

All include key steps, such as making sure that vans are properly loaded and not fully loaded, that seat belts always are used, that drivers are experienced in operating passenger vans and that the vehicles are carefully maintained.

However, for some, the possibility of an accident — and a sizable lawsuit — is too much to risk. They suggest going farther, calling on those who use the passenger vans for transportation of groups to move to using minivans

or smaller school buses or compact shuttles.

The move to a new mode of transportation may cost something — but not as much if one has to deal with a death or serious injury as a result of an accident, they insist.

Whatever decision is made, observers all agree on one thing: now that the word on the 15-passenger vans is out, something must be done.

The Baptist Message is the newsjournal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention.



For instance, in 2000, South Carolina passed a law phasing out the use of "non-conforming" vehicles by private schools and other groups. The impetus for the law dates back to 1994, when a 6-year-old was killed in a van operated by an Episcopal school. The parents sued everyone involved — and the result was the largest wrongful death settlement ever in the state of South Carolina, with the church school held negligent for using an improper vehicle for students.

"What this tells us is that the courts are slowly closing the loophole that was created in 1974," an OutdoorEd.com article by Preston Cline states. "In addition, it is not hard to figure out that if the courts are ruling that a school was found to be negligent in using a 15-passenger van to transport an adolescent, any program transporting an adolescent in a 15-passenger van could be found negligent."

In other words — users be very, very, very aware. That includes churches, notes the June 26, 2002, edition of the

"If a court concludes that a church's use of a 15-passenger van amounts to gross negligence, then, the church may be assessed punitive damages (which are not covered under its general liability insurance policy), and the members of the church board may be personally liable," they warn.

Louisiana Baptist Convention attorney Greg Erwin of Baton Rouge affirmed the possibility of such risk, especially if there is common knowledge that a warning about potential dangers has been issued.

Miami homosexual rights repeal defeated

MIAMI (BP) — An effort to repeal the homosexual-rights ordinance of Miami-Dade County appeared to fall short in the Sept. 10 primary election in Florida. With 656 of 754 precincts tallied the morning of Sept. 11 amid a new round of election glitches, the anti-repeal vote totaled 52.9%, with 47.1% in

favor of repeal, (145,971-130,100). Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas, a leading supporter of the homosexual-rights ordinance adopted by the Miami-Dade County Commission in 1998, said, "... we sent a very strong message today," the Associated Press (AP) reported.

AP also reported that a leader of the Take Back Miami-Dade organization at the forefront of the repeal effort claimed the vote had

been "rigged. Anti-repeal forces are in control of the mayor's office and the department of elections," said Eladio Jose Armesto, according to the AP.

Armesto alleged Dade County elections supervisor David Leahy was "rigging the computerized voting machine in order to undercount votes for the repeal of the sexual orientation [ordinance]."

A spokesman for Leahy told the Miami Herald that Armesto's accusation was "preposterous" and insulting, while Penelas said it was "just one more indication that you have a campaign run by extremists..."

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HOMECOMING - Leland, Lakeview Baptist Church 50th Anniversary Sunday, September 22, 2002; services begin at 10:30 a.m., dinner and afternoon singing, S.B. Boyette, Pastor.

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FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

God Forgives

Psalm 51:1 - 17

By Gene Neal

When asked to list some of the most familiar characters in the Bible, names like Adam, Noah, Jacob, Moses, Peter, and Paul come to mind. Think about these for a moment: Adam - the father of original sin, Noah - got drunk and naked, resulting in one of his sons to be cursed, Jacob - committed fraud and lied to his own father, Moses - committed murder, Peter - violently denied knowing Jesus, Paul - spent part of his adult life persecuting the Christian church. Wow! These heroes of the Bible sound like a corrupt bunch of sinners, don't they? Can't we find a name with a better reputation? We might mention David, the man after God's own heart, but then there's the

terrible occasion of adultery with Bathsheba, followed by lies, manipulation, deceit, and conspiracy to commit murder. How can David, not to mention nearly every character in scripture, be so guilty and yet still considered a man of God? Grace! God's grace! God's amazing grace! By the way, the grace that offered those sinners forgiveness of their sins is still offered today. As we look at David's prayer in Psalm 51, we discover the process by which he was able to realize God's grace and forgiveness. While each person relates to God individually, the principles David teaches in this Psalm apply to every person who needs God's forgiveness.

David began with a plea for pardon. This plea was much



Neal

more than "God, I'm sorry I got caught," or "God, please get me out of this mess." In this plea for pardon, David expressed an unconditional admission of personal guilt. In verses 1 and 2 he used the words transgression, iniquity, and sin. The word transgressions means to revolt or rebel, iniquity means twisted attitude and conduct, and sin means missing the mark. Obviously, David is not pointing a finger or laying blame on anyone but himself. Accepting personal responsibility for sin is always the first step to receiving God's gracious forgiveness. David also used a three-fold picture to describe the removal of sin and guilt when he used the words blot out, wash, and cleanse. These words, along with verse 6, teach us that the removal of sin takes place deep within a person's heart rather than on the outside.

Next, David voices a prayer for purity. There is an incredible lesson for us in verse 10. The

word David uses for "create" was the same word used in the creation story. It means to bring into being something that did not exist previously. God's grace does not return us to the way we were (Praise the Lord!) but makes us brand new in His eyes. David had no desire to be the way he was before - and neither should we! We must be careful with verse 11 and not read into it the idea that Christians can lose God's presence or that He will take back His spirit that is given at salvation. Nothing can separate the true follower of Christ from His love or presence, but sin will rob us of the awareness of His spirit. Unconfessed sin in the life of a believer acts as a malignant tumor eating away at individual intimacy in worship (vs. 8), strength to stand firm against temptation (vs. 10), joy that comes with knowing Christ (vs. 12), and effectiveness in service (vs. 13). In verse 12, David also asked God to give him an attitude that would respond willingly to the right things. Another meaning of "willing" is ready or prompt. In other

words, David was asking God for the strength and maturity to do the right things and make the right choices spontaneously.

Finally, David voices a promise to praise God in his life. In verses 14 and 15, David shows us the natural result of experiencing God's forgiveness, a life of praise. Notice, the life that has experienced God's gracious forgiveness expresses that experience from the inside out. While ceremonies, rituals, and traditions are fine, they mean nothing unless the heart has changed.

This beautiful psalm of David teaches us much about the burden of guilt, personal responsibility, confession, forgiveness, grace, and reconciliation. More than that, it gives us hope that each of us, like David and the other Biblical characters, can rise above the sin that destroys and enjoy the gracious forgiveness of our Lord. Each of us can be men and women after God's own heart.

Neal is pastor of First Church, Quitman.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

Being Born Again

John 3

By Ginger M. Caughman

Today in the hospital in Magee, four new babies were born. Eight have been delivered in three days, no twins. Physical birth is a precious gift. Thank God for this day of life.

Likewise spiritual birth is a special gift offered to all. The spiritual birth yields eternal life. Be grateful if you have this eternal gift from our Heavenly Father through believing in His Son, Jesus Christ. Perhaps the meaning of the spiritual birth and being born again puzzles you. Like Nicodemus, you may have questions. The necessity, possibility, and basis of New Birth are all found here.

1. Read John 3:1-3.

Jesus told Nicodemus the necessity of being born again. The Greek word for again (v. 3)

can also be translated "anew" or "from above." All translations point to the same truth, a birth that is spiritual in nature.

2. Read John 3:4-8.

Jesus explained to Nicodemus that being born again is the work of God's Spirit in a person's life (vv. 6-8).

Our Southern Baptist literature is published in a wonderful facility that covers an entire city block. LifeWay has its own zip code because of the large volume of mail going out all over the country. You can tour the facility when you are in Nashville. On my first trip to "the Board" (formerly the Baptist Sunday School Board) there was no time for a tour before my flight home. I saw a door labeled "Prayer Room" and



Caughman

went inside. Many years hence but I still remember every detail of that room. A soft chair, a lamp, and a book on a reading table. Dominating the room was a lighted oil painting of Jesus talking to Nicodemus with a large Bible underneath on a prayer

bench. The Bible was open to our focal passage. Perhaps it was the large print Bible. Perhaps it was the many questions I had asked at my first writer's conference. By the Holy Spirit's design, the question marks stood out, and I saw how many questions were asked of our Lord.

Do you have questions? Jesus can handle them. Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jewish council was full of questions when he talked to Jesus. "How can I be born again? What do you mean, born again? I can't enter into my mother's womb for a rebirth. Anyway, how can a man be born when he is old?" All of these questions rushed from

his mind through his mouth.

Many interpretations are made of this passage. Focus your attention on what Jesus emphasized, the need to be born of the spirit.

3. Read John 3:9-17.

The truth of the eternity of Jesus Christ has already been established in John 1. Just as Jesus explained the Scriptures to the disciples on the Emmaus road (Luke 24), here He explained the Scriptures to a Pharisee, one who was learned in the Old Testament Scriptures. As a Pharisee, Nicodemus studied and interpreted the Law. Jesus spoke of the law of Moses (v. 14), referred to His own death on the cross, and continued speaking. (Read through verse 21).

I still remember an elderly Baptist deacon, B. P. Nichols, preaching years ago on Layman's Day from his favorite text, John 3:16. Visualize this: In your right hand is a copy of the Holy Bible opened to the passage in John. A small walnut shell is in your left hand. The nut has been carefully opened, the meat removed and the words

from John 3:16 typed on a piece of paper, folded and placed inside the shell. "Mr. Nick" was the first that I heard call John 3:16 "the Gospel in a nutshell." Gospel means Good News.

While watching a nationally televised ballgame, a woman had seen a sign raised by a fan and asked me: "What does John 3:16 mean?" Share your faith in Jesus Christ with someone by reading or reciting this verse called the Gospel in a nutshell. We would never want to minimize the importance of the entire Bible or all of the Gospel writers to tell us about the biography of our Lord Jesus, but be ready always to give an answer for the hope that's in you! (1 Peter 3:15).

Jesus explained to Nicodemus that new birth is available because of God's love; love supremely demonstrated in God's sending Jesus Christ. To enter God's kingdom, a person of any age can come to Jesus for salvation and be born spiritually. Are you born again?

Caughman is a member of First Church Magee.

Guidelines for submitting news and photographs

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention.

News submitted for publication in The Baptist Record must be either (a) typewritten, (b) neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper, or (c) neatly printed on standardized forms provided by the newspaper. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone.

News may be submitted electronically to the address below, and must be contained in the message segment of an e-mail form. Due to increasing virus threats,



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THE VILLAGE VIEW



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Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of **The Village View** is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful, and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

AUGUST 1 - 30 MEMORIALS

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Chrystelle Thames (left), Director of Public Relations, and Celeste Cade, Public Relations Associate, of The Baptist Children's Village were recently awarded the Lantern Award of Excellence for work adjudged in the annual competition of the Southern Public Relations Federation. The award was presented at the convening of the members from Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, and Mississippi.

Lynn H. Taylor
Ms. Kaye M. Henderson
Roberta Crowell Taylor
Mr. & Mrs. Robert G. Griffith
Mrs. Willene Tench
Mr. & Mrs. Andrew J. Churchwell
Mr. Kenneth (Kenny) Thomas
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Ms. Arda Joy Thompson

BGCT alters ties with Korean group

DALLAS (BP) — After 21 years of supporting the Korean Baptist Fellowship of Texas (KBFT) which it helped to start, the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) has voted to provide funding for Korean work in Texas through individual congregations rather than through the KBFT.

The action comes after the KBFT voted at its annual convention Aug. 5 to dually align with the BGCT and the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC), a newer convention strongly aligned with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

BGCT Executive Director Charles Wade noted, "While this change saddens us, it opens an opportunity for change. The vote by KBFT to dually align drastically changes our existing relationship. Now we at the BGCT must allow God to turn this otherwise painful situation into an opportunity to do His work even better than before."

The Texas population includes more than 100,000 Koreans, most of whom are concentrated in the larger cities such as Dallas-Fort Worth and Houston.

Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx
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MH UHB BDLUW BDRB

L YLPP RKKIZG AHI BH

BDG TRBDGX: BDGXX

LZ HUG BDRB

RKKIZGBD AHI, GOGU

CHZGZ, LU YDHC AG

BXIZB.

SHDU TLOG:

THXBA-TLOG

Clue: B=T

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Psalms Twenty-Four: One

Texas Baptists to form missions network

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The creation of a new world missions network that critics say would rival the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board (IMB) and North American Mission Board (NAMB) has been endorsed by the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT) administrative committee. The proposed network would be an affiliate of the BGCT and would help churches send missionaries globally.

In a related matter, the committee also recommended that the percentage of church funds kept in Texas be raised to 79% of BGCT receipts, with the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and other missions entities being lowered to 21% of budget.

The proposal also would lift controversial caps that the BGCT placed on giving to the SBC Executive Committee, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, and the SBC seminaries.

"We don't expect all of the churches to participate in the new giving plan but it is designed to make the choice uniquely up to the church," said BGCT spokesperson Becky Bridges. "Our percentages were determined by the number of churches that might choose the new giving plan and what is necessary to keep BGCT ministries open."

Morris H. Chapman, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee, said he believes Texas Baptists will continue to support SBC missions regardless of the latest BGCT plans.

"It is obvious BGCT leaders are moving the state convention even farther away from a healthy relationship with the SBC," Chapman said. "Regardless, I know God's work is going to be done and I trust His will regarding Southern Baptists' role in advancing His kingdom."

"I also trust the goodness of our Southern Baptist churches in Texas and that they will continue to be faithful in their support of Southern Baptist missions, ministries, and theological education," Chapman added.

Jack Graham, president of the SBC and pastor of the Dallas-area Prestonwood Church in Plano, told Baptist Press that Texas Baptists should be wary of the BGCT's proposal.

"I think every Southern Baptist church in Texas should evaluate this latest move and prayerfully consider an action that would support SBC missions," Graham said. "I think more and more of our churches in Texas will change their giving profile to make sure that SBC missions are funded."

Charles Wade, BGCT executive director said in an inter-

view with The Baptist Standard, "Texas Baptists are interested in a bold new vision, not recreating what already exists through traditional missions sending agencies. This world missions network would create a way to connect churches and institutions with needs, opportunities, and resources."

Bill Tinsley, associate executive director of the BGCT, told Baptist Press the new missions agency is not in competition with SBC missions entities.

"The committee is very specific that we are not a missions-sending agency," Tinsley said. "We are still committed to a cooperative relationship with the SBC."

Tinsley acknowledged that a BGCT missions study committee did not have any formal contact or discussions with either Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) or SBC leaders about the proposed new venture. "I don't know why we didn't," Tinsley said. "It was something that Texas wanted to do. I don't think it will have an impact on SBC missions."

Associated Baptist Press (ABP), however, reported that committee members did have contact with a CBF leader. CBF Coordinator Daniel Vestal said he had several discussions with subcommittees of the task force, which he described as "cordial."

"I never expected this committee to recommend a connectional relationship with CBF like they've had in the past with the SBC," Vestal told ABP. "I had hoped for and am pleased with their recommendation that BGCT find ways to partner with CBF. We look forward to that. We already partner with Texas Baptists in a number of ways."

Tinsley said the proposed BGCT missions agency will network churches to do missions. "When you are in a missions setting, to get missions done, you want to work with whoever you can," he said, noting one instance where an IMB missionary to Siberia was given assistance by CBF missionaries.

The BGCT administrative committee endorsed the proposed plan at its Aug. 29-30 meeting in Dallas. The proposal came from the BGCT's Missions Review and Initiatives Committee. Messengers at the BGCT's annual meeting, Nov. 10-11 in Waco, Texas, will have final say on the matter, pending approval by the BGCT executive board at its Sept. 24 meeting.

The new missions agency would work with existing Baptist missions agencies including the IMB, NAMB, the Baptist World Alliance, and the CBF Global Missions, according to a news release on the BGCT's website.

Kingdom Family Rally chief extols intact homes

WAKE FOREST, N.C. (BP) — Only by breaking up their hardened hearts can Christians hope to expect revival in their homes and in their nation, said Tom Elliff, chairman of the Southern Baptist Council on Family Life. To that end, Elliff spoke recently to future pastors, missionaries, and church leaders at Southeastern Seminary, inspiring them to look to God's Word for an example of true and heartfelt revival.

In introducing the former Southern Baptist Convention president and pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Del City, Okla., Southeastern Seminary President Paige Patterson praised Elliff as a man of rare courage and integrity, one whose leadership and devotion led Southern Baptists in 1998 to move to the cultural forefront by adding a statement on the family to its confession of faith.

Elliff will oversee the first convention-wide Kingdom Family Rally during the mid-June Pastors' Conference at next year's Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting in Phoenix.

His vision is to "make the church a lighthouse for people whose marriages and families have been ravaged and torn apart," Elliff said, but to be lighthouses Christians must first experience revival in their own hearts and homes. The Bible gives a prescription for such revival in Hosea chapter 10, where Elliff pointed out the importance of breaking up the "fallow ground" of the human heart.

Elliff noted first that the passage contains an admonition to fear hardheartedness. He described symptoms of this condition as being "impervious" to the Word



Elliff

of God, having a life that shows no fruits of the Spirit of God, and being known "more for resistance than receptivity."

Second, Elliff said, the passage contains a command to follow God completely, which for Christians means ridding their hearts of secret sins and bad habits. It also means forsaking outward sins and a passionless walk with Christ.

"If a man does not confess his sins, his walk with God will never get better," Elliff counseled. "It will only get worse."

The Scriptures also point out a choice to be faced by every Christian: Ignore sin and remain hardhearted, or confess sin and experience revival in the heart and home. "If you choose not to break up the fallow ground of your heart, it could be your final choice in the matter," he warned. "We come to God on His terms and in His time or we don't come at all."

How does one break up this "fallow ground?" Elliff listed four steps:

- Get alone with God, because the "pathway into God's presence is a lonely pathway" and must be traversed alone, Elliff said.

- Make a "sin list," an account of all the ways the Spirit reveals that you have sinned against God and others.

- Claim God's cleansing by taking that "sin list" and writing 1 John 1:9 on top of it: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

- Go apologize and confess to friends and family against whom you have sinned. "You say, 'What they don't know won't hurt them,'" Elliff said. "I say, what they don't know is already hurting them."

By following the prescription of God's Word, Christians can spark revival in their country by taking responsibility for it in their hearts and homes, Elliff said.

"I cannot tell you how much that our country needs an awakening. What you can do," he reiterated, "is to break up the fallow ground of your heart. It's not easy, but it is absolutely essential."